Surfaces
By Kay Ryan

Surfaces serve their own purposes, strive to remain constant (all lives want that). There is a skin, not just on peaches but on oceans (note the telltale slough of foam on beaches). Sometimes it’s loose, as in the case of cats: you feel how a second life slides under it. Sometimes it fits. Take glass. Sometimes it outlasts its underside. Take reefs.

The private lives of surfaces are innocent, not devious. Take the one-dimensional belief of enamel in itself, the furious autonomy of luster (crush a pearl—it’s powder), the whole curious seamlessness of how we’re each surrounded and what it doesn’t teach.


Source: Elephant Rocks (Grove/Atlantic Inc., 1997)